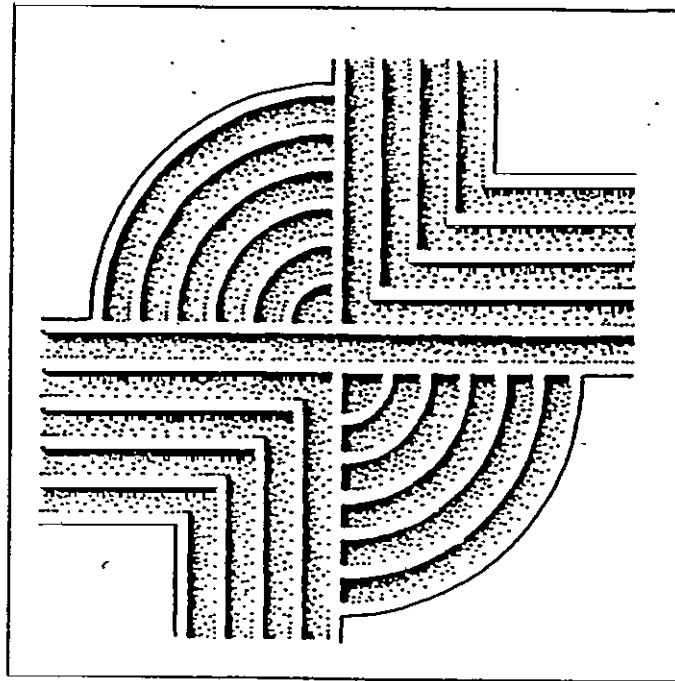


# **MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION AT 38BU634, HAIG POINT, DAUFUSKIE ISLAND [BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA]**



## **RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 27**

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION

AT 38BU634, HAIG POINT, DAUFUSKIE ISLAND

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## Introduction

As a result of a reconnaissance level archaeological survey conducted by Michie (1983) of portions of Daufuskie Island in Beaufort County, South Carolina, the S.C. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) defined sixteen sites as eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (letter from Ms. Christie Fant, dated September 21, 1987, to Mr. Ray Pantlik). Because of limited boundary information for most of these sites Chicora Foundation was contracted by International Paper Realty Corporation of South Carolina in May 1988 to provide additional information for planning purposes (Trinkley 1988). This additional work by Chicora included auger testing sufficient to determine the boundaries of 38BU634, also know as the South Tabby Site. International Paper, in the process of advancing development plans for the area containing this site, requested that Chicora prepare a research design for the mitigation of the site.

Chicora entered into an agreement on July 12 with International Paper to conduct the necessary archaeological investigations at the site, based on our May 30 proposal, revised on June 27. The revised research design was approved by the SHPO on June 29. This work involves excavation at only three of the eight structures evidenced by tabby chimney ruins, as well as tests at four of the shell middens apparently associated with the structures. International Paper has agreed to green space and protect the remaining five structures.

This present management summary has been prepared immediately upon completion of the fieldwork and does not contain information on artifact analysis. It is intended solely to provide a brief descriptive statement of the work conducted by Chicora and to allow the SHPO to verify that the proposed work has actually been accomplished. This management summary is minimally necessary for International Paper to obtain approval from the SHPO to continue the development of the land encompassing 38BU634. This construction will destroy portions of the site and, of course, created the need for archaeological mitigation activities initially.

Archaeological investigations were begun at 38BU634 by a crew of four on July 25 and continued through August 17, 1988. A total of 536 person hours were spent in the field, although 44.5 person hours were lost to rain and 8 person hours involved laboratory processing. As a result of this work 1250 square feet of site area were opened and 1007.5 cubic feet of soil and shell were moved in primary excavations, all screened through either

1/4 or 1/8-inch mesh.

### Previous Site Surveys

This site was first recorded as a result of Michie's (1988:75) survey, although at the time only the two above grade chimney ruins and several associated middens were recognized. Some testing at the site was conducted by Michie, but the field notes for this work have been lost. Subsequent work by Lepionka (1988) identified the remaining six below grade chimney footings, although no boundary information was collected. Additional work conducted by Chicora in late June and early July included testing the site with 60 auger tests placed at 50 foot intervals over an area 200 by 550 feet in size. In addition, a series of 10 shovel tests were used to further explore certain areas. Site boundaries were established based on this work (Trinkley 1988).

A possibly associated site, known as the "Historic Middens" or 38BU630, is reported to be in the vicinity of 38BU634, although neither Michie's (1983) report or the site form on file at the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology have allowed the location to be clearly identified. Lepionka (1988:279) associates the site with the shell middens at the eastern end of the 38BU634 slave row (Structures 7 and 8). While this may be a correct interpretation, we have chosen to designate all of the remains (both shell middens and structures) as site 38BU634.

The auger tests, which used a 10-inch bit and a 1/4-inch screen, yielded very sparse remains. The work suggested that the site consisted of structures with architectural remains, middens which might yield domestic and food refuse, and relatively clean yard areas. This survey suggested that work should be divided between the structures themselves and the associated middens, with little or no work devoted to the open yard areas.

### Excavations

The grid, established at W9°S, was tied into several topographic features and the South Carolina Plane Coordinate System in order to maintain long-term horizontal control. Two rebar points were established for this work, although we anticipate the development activity will destroy these stations. Vertical control was maintained through the use of a mean sea level datum.

The site area had been marked out in 50-foot grid units for the auger survey, with each point numbered in succession from south to north and west to east (Figure 1). These numbers were used to number 50-foot blocks, with each block designated by its southeast corner auger test number. Within these blocks a modified Chicago 10-foot grid was established, with each square

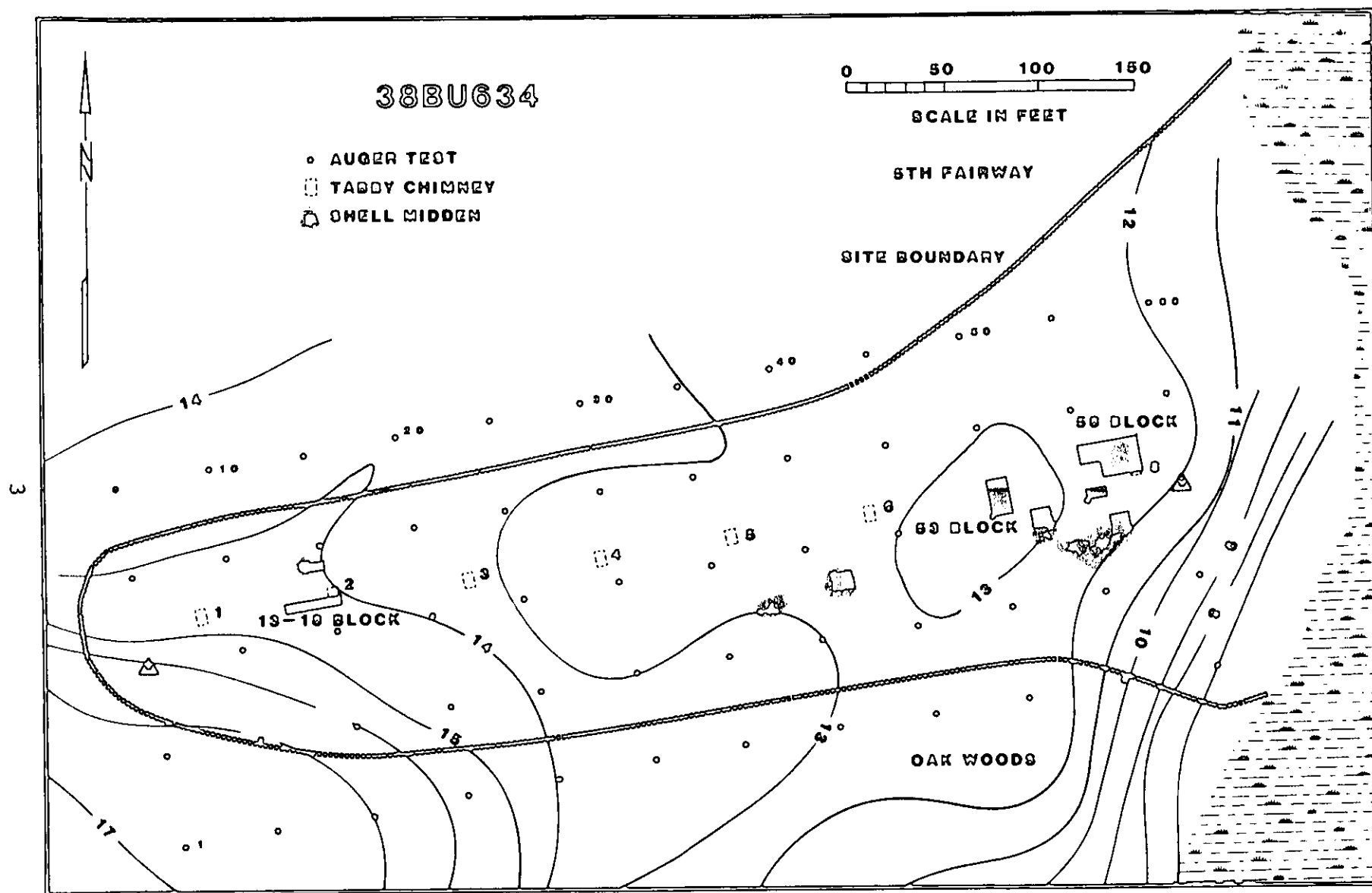


Figure 1. Archaeological site 38BU634, South Tabby Site, Haig Point Plantation.

designated by its southeast corner, from a OR0 point at the southwest corner of the 50-foot block. Thus, square 12-10R10 would be located in the 50-foot square auger test block number 12 and the southeast corner of the square would be north 10 feet and right (or east) 10 feet from the OR0 point (or the block's southwest corner).

Soil from the structure excavations was screened through 1/4-inch mesh using mechanical sifters. Soil from the shell middens was screened through 1/8-inch mesh to improve the recovery of small animal bones. In addition, a two foot square sample of each midden was weighed prior to sifting and the shell, collected for analysis, was weighed after screening. This provided a quantified statement of shell density for each of the middens. Shellfish analysis will include species diversity, habitat information, and season of collection. Primary species involved in these studies will be oyster and clam.

Units were troweled at the top of the subsoil, photographed in b/w and color slides, and plotted. Excavation was by natural soil zones and soil samples were routinely collected. Features were usually bisected, with both small soil samples and flotation samples collected. Features were excavated by natural soil zones and were separately photographed, plotted, and profiled during their removal. The feature fill was screened through 1/8-inch mesh to improve on the recovery rate of faunal materials.

Field notes were prepared on archival paper and photographic material was processed to archival standards. All original field notes, with archival copies, will be curated at The Environmental and Historical Museum of Hilton Head Island, as Accession Number 1988.5. All specimens will be evaluated for conservation needs and will be treated prior to curation.

The largest block excavation, centered on Structure 8, opened 550 square feet and is designated the 58 Block. The area encompassed approximately the northern half of the structure. The stratigraphy was varied, but generally involved either a zone of tabby rubble (centered around the at-grade chimney) or a black humic sandy loam (both designated Zone 1). Under the tabby rubble was a zone of brown sand with lesser quantities of rubble and shell (designated Zone 3), while elsewhere the black humic sand overlaid yellow subsoil. The tabby rubble, while associated with the chimney fall, seems to be contained within the posited structure, suggesting that the decay of the structure was gradual. There is no evidence for agricultural disturbances, although tree stains and root disturbances are common. Features identified within this structure include the chimney footing and associated fill (Feature 1) and a drip line (Feature 3). The drip line allows the approximate width of the structure to be determined (about 16 feet), but the western end of the structure has been destroyed by erosion associated with a dirt road.

Feature 1 revealed that the hearth was originally constructed as a poured tabby floor. As this floor was destroyed by heat, it was replaced with sand. The occasional discovery of a fired clay brick suggests that the hearth edge may have been laid in brick. The feature provided evidence of the original hearth in one area and this has allowed the hearth elevation to be determined. Feature 3 represents an irregular drip line, suggestive of either board shingles or extensive repair of the roof. Artifacts are sparse, suggesting that the yard area was relatively free from refuse (supporting the earlier auger test results).

While removing Zone 1 within the structure we isolated portions of poured tabby flooring which appeared to be in situ. These floor fragments were commonly 0.1 to 0.2 foot in thickness and consisted of a layer of shell underlying a tabby slurry. It appears that the floor had broken up prior to the abandonment of the structure and no effort was made to repair or replace the flooring.

Structure 7 was investigated by Block 53, containing 200 square feet, which fully exposed the at-grade chimney footing. This chimney footing, designated Feature 2, is identical in construction to Feature 1 and only the northern half of the fire box was removed. No evidence of a drip line was found at this structure, although the west profile clearly revealed that the rubble from the chimney fall was again contained within the posited structure walls. These units also yielded a stratigraphy identical to that found in Block 57. Time did not allow further investigation.

Structure 2, investigated by the 13 Block, was found to have been extensively plowed. The chimney footing was heavily damaged and plow scars were evident throughout the 5 by 30 foot trench excavated in an attempt to identify evidence for the length of the structure. Artifacts, including faunal remains, were very sparse in this block. Because of the extensive disturbance there was no reason to continue investigations in this area.

In addition to the excavations at the three structures, a series of four shell middens thought to be associated with individual houses were examined. Three middens were investigated with a single 10-foot square in each (47-25R20, 52-40R30, and 57-30R20) and the fourth midden was investigated using a 5 by 10-foot trench (13-15R35). These middens revealed considerable diversity in the density of shell, artifacts, and faunal remains. Within each midden there was minimally a Zone 1 consisting of dense shell midden overlying the mixed shell and brown sand of Zone 3 which represents the old humus. Underlying Zone 3 was yellow sand subsoil. The stratigraphy in 57-30R20 was somewhat distinct. Underlying the Zone 1 shell midden was a zone of tan sand which appeared to cap the Zone 3 humus. This sand may

represent a by-product of the tabby construction and artifact content within the strata was low. Below this cap the Zone 3 humus contained primarily aboriginal ceramics dating to about A.D. 1200 (Irene). Several stains, originally thought to be preserved Irene features, were later identified as tree disturbances.

In general, the midden at 47-25R20 produced quantities of artifacts and large mammal remains, but few fish. The 52-40R30 midden yielded very low quantities of both artifacts and faunal remains, while the 57-30R20 midden produced a moderate quantity of artifacts and a number of fish remains. The midden at 13-15R35 was distinct from all of the other areas tested. A very low density of both artifacts and faunal remains were encountered, although the ceramics recovered from the midden were uniformly large.

### Interpretations

Although there has been considerable historical research conducted on Daufuskie Island, including Starr's (1986) study of Haig Point, this previous research has provided only a superficial understanding of the late antebellum occupation of the Haig Point Plantation. For example, Starr (1986:19) devotes less than a single page to the tenure of William Pope, who acquired the plantation in 1852.

The Haig Point tract has been traced back to a 1735 survey for Archibald Neile, although no grant has been located (Starr 1986:11). The property took on the name of its subsequent owners, George Haig I, II, and III. Throughout this time the property was apparently undeveloped and Starr (1986:15) notes that an 1810 advertisement for the tract describes the property as "400 acres (more or less) of valuable COTTON LAND," rather than as a "cotton plantation" which would suggest an active operation. The property was purchased in 1810 by John David Mongin, along with the southern plantation known as Freeport, for his son David John Mongin.

John David Mongin's plantation was at Bloody Point and the diary of Jeremiah Evarts indicates that David John Mongin and his wife Sarah were living at Bloody Point during his visit in 1822 (Starr 1986:17). In fact, Evarts makes no mention of any main house at Haig Point, which seems unusual considering Brooker's remarks that "the house must have formed at striking landmark" (Brooker n.d.:71). The 1820 census, however, indicates that 93 slaves may have been living on the Haig Point Plantation (Starr 1986:17).

David John Mongin died in 1823, leaving the property to his widow, Sarah. In 1825 she marries the Reverend Hiram Blodgett, although she remains the sole administrator of David John



Mongin's estate (which includes both Haig Point and Freeport). The 1830 census lists two properties which belong to her deceased husband's estate. Although Starr (1986:18) is equivocal, it seems likely that the one listed simply as "Mongin, David John, Jr., Est." probably represents Haig Point. If so, there were 85 slaves on the plantation at that time. The other property, with 89 slaves, is listed as "Blodgett, Herman & Mr. Webb & Mr. Coe" and seems to represent the Freeport Plantation.

The first documented reference to the main house at Haig Point Plantation is the 1833 obituary for Sarah, who died in the house. In 1840 Sarah's husband, Hiram Blodgett, was still living at the main house and the plantation had 109 slaves. Blodgett sold the plantation to William Pope, Sr., who owned three plantations on Hilton Head Island and two additional plantations in St. Luke's Parish (Starr 1986:18-19). Regrettably, the 1860 census combines all of Pope's holdings for St. Luke's Parish and we know only that Pope owned 200 slaves in 65 houses (approximately three slaves per house) (Starr 1986:19). It seems likely that the Haig Point Plantation was entirely an absentee holding, desired by Pope for its economic potential. However, this line of speculation has received little attention and the exact place of Haig Point in Pope's holdings is unknown.

Haig Point was abandoned after the November 1861 invasion of the Port Royal area and the property was purchased by the Federal Government in 1865. Restoration by the Pope heirs was achieved by 1872, although it is likely that the plantation house was either abandoned, or actually destroyed, by that time. One of the heirs was Eliza Woodward, who may have had a structure in the vicinity of 38BU628 (known as the Woodward House Site), based on the 1873 Law and Kirk map of Beaufort County (U.S. Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks, Map 87155). The Haig Point Lighthouse and associated structures were built on top of the old plantation house between 1873 and 1895.

Although this historical documentation is rather sparse, it seems likely that the impressive main plantation house at Haig Point was built after David John Mongin's death in 1823 by his widow. Prior to this time David John may have lived with his father on Bloody Point, where he was found in 1822 by Evarts. This is not inconsistent with either the archaeological or architectural evidence and is based on the absence of any mention of a structure in the Evarts diary. While Starr (1986:17) suggests a construction date as early as 1820 based on a separate listing for David John Mongin in the 1820 census and "common sense." Yet, it could be argued that an individual such as David John Mongin who "every evening . . . is so overcome with strong drink, as to be silly [and] every morning, full of pain, languor, and destitute of appetite" (Evarts diary, quoted in Starr 1984:68) would have been incapable of envisioning and implementing the construction of the Haig Point mansion. It

seems more likely that either David John Mongin's widow, or his father, built the house after his death.

Of equal interest, however, is the location of sufficient slave housing for the over 100 slaves in the late antebellum period. This would suggest the need for about 20 structures, assuming up to five slaves per unit. There are at least 10 structures at 38BU153, with an additional eight found at 38BU634, so there may have been adequate structures for the late antebellum slave population. Brooker has suggested that there are at least two construction episodes reflected in the slave cabins and probably three (Colin Brooker, personal communication 1988). The earliest episode, reflected by the three all tabby structures (38BU153E-G), probably dates from the period of main house construction. These three structures are thought to have been built for house servants, based on their substantial construction and close ties to main house. The later construction episodes, represented at least by 38BU153A-C and the structures at 38BU634, dates to the very late antebellum period and would seem to reflect a period of plantation expansion. On historical grounds a date post-1823 is suggested, perhaps as early as the 1830s or as late as the 1860s. Additional information is offered by the archaeological remains, discussed below. If this tentative reconstruction is correct, insufficient housing has been documented to support the early antebellum population of 93 slaves. Either an entirely unrecorded slave row existed on the Haig Point Plantation or the existing slave rows were periodically rebuilt.

The archaeological and architectural evidence from 38BU634 suggests a late construction date, perhaps as late as Pope's purchase of the plantation in 1850. While the complete analysis of the recovered artifacts and the calculation of mean ceramic dates will assist in estimating the mean occupation of the structures, preliminary indications (such as the dominance of edged, plain, annular, and transfer printed whitewares) suggests a date of about 1850. The recovery of a single Union army button from one structure and the absence of postbellum ceramics suggests that the site was not occupied past about 1865. This correlates well with Brooker's estimation that the houses would not have survived a period of more than 20 years (Colin Brooker, personal communication, 1988).

The structures appear to have been constructed at-grade, with a wood sill laid directly on the old humus. While the tabby construction was generally poor, there is evidence that the row was carefully laid out. There do not seem to be sufficient nails to support construction with framing and horizontal board siding. In addition, the use of relatively large pentles recovered from the site seems unlikely in frame construction. The possibility that the structures were log is being considered. While window glass is found in very small quantities, the window

openings were probably shuttered. The floor, as previously discussed, evidences a tabby plaster. The chimneys were apparently constructed from tabby bricks. Most of the middens are found south of the structures, which suggests that the "street" may have been to the north. The yard area was kept clean and the middens are the only remaining evidence of trash disposal. They, however, seem to yield insufficient refuse and the nearby marsh may have received the bulk of the slaves' trash.

The artifact assemblage will be subjected to a thorough artifact pattern study, but we anticipate the material to reflect a Georgia Slave Artifact Pattern. Domestic refuse, while present, is not common and the materials found are uniformly of low status. Many of the ceramics evidence very heavy use. This archaeological evidence is supported by the observations of slave life on Daufuskie made by Evarts (Starr 1984:68-69). There is only a small quantity of Colono Ware ceramics.

Subsistence studies will be conducted, using the faunal, ethnobotanical, and shellfish remains. At the present time the soil samples are being water floated for recovery of ethnobotanical remains, while the faunal material is being cataloged. Shell samples will be submitted to our consultants within the next several weeks.

The investigations at 38BU634 are particularly important because we have the opportunity to study a late antebellum slave occupation which has no postbellum continuation. Although there are relatively few other slave sites in the Beaufort area with which to compare these data (cf. Grunden 1985) this study will provide a useful account of slave lifeways on Daufuskie Island.

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